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HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA

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Hélène Laverdière

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Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Hon. Jane Philpott, Minister of Health
Hon. François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of International Trade

July 21, 2017

Dear Ministers,

I write to request clarification on the Canadian government's position with regard to goods produced in Palestinian territories occupied by Israel.

In recent weeks there has been some confusion regarding the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's position on the importation of wines produced in illegal Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territories – wines labeled as "Made in Israel".

I draw your attention to United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016), which "*Calls upon all States... to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967.*"

Ministers, I remind you that UN Security Council Resolutions are binding on all member states.

I also remind you of your government's stated position on settlements: "*Canada does not recognize permanent Israeli control over territories occupied in 1967 (the Golan Heights, the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip). The Fourth Geneva Convention applies in the occupied territories and establishes Israel's obligations as an occupying power, in particular with respect to the humane treatment of the inhabitants of the occupied territories. As referred to in UN Security Council Resolutions 446 and 465, Israeli settlements in the occupied territories are a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. The settlements also constitute a serious obstacle to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace.*"

While I understand that the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement considers “with respect to Israel the territory where its customs laws are applied” (Article 1.4.1), surely the Canadian government does not consider illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories part of Israeli territory?

I therefore urgently request clarity regarding your government’s position with regard to Canada’s obligations under UN Security Council Resolution 2334 to distinguish between goods from the State of Israel, and the territories occupied since 1967.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Hélène Laverdière".

Hélène Laverdière
NDP Foreign Affairs Critic

CC:

Tracey Ramsey, NDP Critic for International Trade
Don Davies, NDP Critic for Health